

Mahon Assails Excessive Talk About Secrets

Associated Press

Excessive talk about United States intelligence secrets was denounced in a House speech yesterday by a Texas Representative who said it is "making us the laughing stock of the world."

"Officials in Moscow, Peking and Havana must applaud our stupidity in announcing publicly facts which they would gladly spend huge sums of money endeavoring to obtain," said Rep. George Mahon (D-Tex.).

Mahon, Chairman of the House Military Appropriations Subcommittee, said the Kennedy Administration "has mistakenly allowed itself to be goaded into revealing information detrimental to our best interests."

He did not cite any specific instances, but said:

"Every day some high-ranking intelligence officer is quoted in the newspapers on some subject or another."

"These men are men who should neither be seen nor heard. A passion for anonymity is an integral part of their jobs."

"There is an intelligence gap in the intelligence of those who are daily revealing the secrets of the intelligence operations of the United States Government."

Mahon, who has been handling defense secrets for more than two decades as a member of the Military Appropriations Subcommittee, demanded an end to the loose talk that he said is doing "outrageous and intolerable" damage to U. S. intelligence efforts.

He said President Kennedy, Vice President Johnson, and House Speaker John W. McCormack (D-Mass.) should get together and halt what he termed "the rapid erosion of our national intelligence effort."

He said the executive branch, the legislative branch, and Republicans and Democrats alike "must share the blame" for the present situation.

Declaring there has been "a great excess of talk" in recent weeks, Mahon told the House:

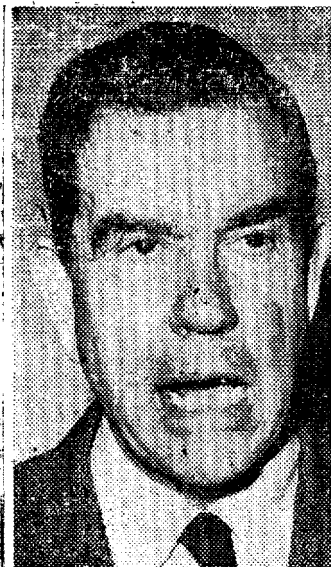
"Members of both the legislative and executive branches have publicly discussed matters which should only be discussed behind closed doors. Headlines are not so precious as to warrant jeopardizing our national security."

"Along with many other Americans, I am tired of these demonstrations of bad judgment."

Mahon said "the deterioration of secrecy in regard to our intelligence-gathering techniques" began in 1960 when U-2 pilot Francis Gary Powers was downed and captured in the Soviet Union. The United States at first denied that Powers was on a military reconnaissance mission, but later admitted it.

Mahon conceded that public curiosity is aroused "by the aura of mystery and adventure which surrounds the intelligence business."

"But we are not playing



Associated Press

REP. GEORGE MAHON
... "too much talk"

games," he said. "Our national survival to a great extent depends on our knowledge of our enemies' activities. . . .

"It is difficult enough to obtain information from closed Communist societies. The American people, the press, and the officials of the executive and legislative branches of the Government must stop making a most difficult task more difficult."

After Mahon spoke, Rep. Paul Rogers (D-Fla.) called for adoption of his resolution to establish a joint congressional committee to coordinate the activities of the Central Intelligence Agency and other similar groups.